



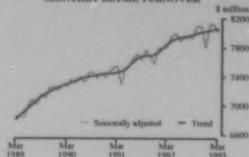
Thursday, 13 May 1993

*The week in statistics ...*

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statistics

MONTHLY RETAIL TURNOVER



## Retail trade flat

Trend estimates of turnover showed only slight growth of 0.1 per cent for retail and selected service establishments over each of the three months ended March 1993. A 1.2 per cent fall in the seasonally adjusted estimate recorded for March has dampened recent signs of improvement.

Growth in the trend estimates for the grocery industry remains weak having been at or below 0.3 per cent per month for the last eight months.

The growth rate for clothing and fabric stores has weakened from the strong growth of 0.7 per cent in December 1992 to a 0.3 per cent increase recorded for March 1993.

Hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs continue to improve and are now showing average growth of 0.4 per cent over the last three months. The trend estimates for other food stores are showing an average decline of 1.3 per cent over the last three months. Department and general stores are also in decline but not to the same extent.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

	Original value in March 1993 (\$ million)	Average monthly percentage change in trend estimates	
		3 months ended March 1993	12 months ended March 1993
Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists	2,432	0.3	0.4
Butchers	206	1.0	1.0
Other food stores	507	-1.3	-0.6
Total food group	3,145	0.3	0.3
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	946	0.4	0.0
Department and general stores	747	-0.5	0.1
Clothing and fabrics stores	492	0.4	-0.3
Electrical goods stores	450	0.7	0.6
Pharmacies	371	1.1	1.1
Newsagents	283	0.1	0.2
Other industries	1,402	n.a.	n.a.
All industries	7,835	0.1	0.2

Among the States and Territories, South Australia is continuing the recovery in turnover that began late last year, and averaged 0.5 per cent trend growth in turnover in the three months to March.

The Australian Capital Territory and Victoria are also recording higher trend growth than the national average, while New South Wales and Tasmania are both in decline — the former since June 1992. Queensland and Western Australia are each showing growth similar to the national average of 0.1 per cent a month.

In constant price (i.e. allowing for price changes) seasonally adjusted terms Australian total turnover in the March quarter declined by 0.2 per cent over the December quarter 1992. The annual real growth over March 1992 was 0.9 per cent.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER  
At average 1989-90 prices, seasonally adjusted

	\$ million	Percentage change	
		From preceding quarter	From corresponding quarter of previous year
1992			
March	21,777	0.9	1.9
June	22,096	1.5	4.6
September	22,040	-0.3	1.7
December	22,000	-0.2	2.0
1993			
March	21,964	-0.2	0.9

For further information, order the publication *Retail Trade, Australia* (8501.0), or contact Bill Powell on (06) 252 6132.

## The trend is to trends

Regular readers of *Statistics Weekly* will have noticed that our summaries of the week's published data now focus consistently on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) trend series rather than seasonally adjusted or original data.

This approach is being adopted throughout the Bureau, and soon all major economic indicator publications will use trend data for the analysis provided in the 'main features'.

ABS publications will continue to provide details of seasonally adjusted and unadjusted series. However, the Bureau as a matter of policy advises users that its trend series are the better guide to the substantive movements, i.e., non-irregular and non-seasonal movements in virtually all the major subject areas covered by its statistical collections.

The smoothing techniques used to produce ABS trend estimates allow those estimates to be published with a high degree of confidence in their statistical usefulness. As a general rule, the ABS recommends that people using its statistics as a basis for business planning or policy decisions should give primary weight to the relevant trend series.

The changes in ABS main features policy are outlined in the information paper identified below. They will be described in more detail in a forthcoming companion paper *Interpreting Time Series — Monitoring 'Trends'* (Cat. No. 1349.0) and will be included in the next round of seminars to be held in Adelaide 25 May, Perth 27 May, Melbourne 8 June, Hobart 10 June, Canberra 15 June, Brisbane 21 June, and Sydney 23 June.

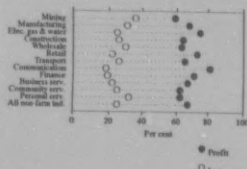
For further information, order the publication *Interpreting Time Series — Monitoring 'Trends'*, an Overview (1348.0), or contact John Zarb on (06) 252 6103 or Philip Carruthers on (06) 252 6345.

## New statistics link performance of businesses and industries

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has commenced a new series of statistics on the operation and performance of all major industry groupings in the Australian economy except public administration and defence.

The first survey covers 1990-91 and embraces all businesses which employ staff. The survey found, for example, that around 67 per cent of non-farm businesses reported an operating profit before tax in 1990-91, although the percentages of businesses reporting profit varied considerably across industries (see graph opposite).

INCIDENCE OF PROFIT/LOSS BY NON-FARM BUSINESSES



The total operating profit before tax of all businesses covered by the survey in 1990-91 was \$60.7 billion, about 9 per cent of total sales. Large business groups accounted for over half of that profit and around 30 per cent was contributed by the finance and insurance industry.

The survey collects information from the standard financial accounts (e.g., profit and loss statements and balance sheets) of approximately 15,000 businesses across Australia. The resulting statistics are, as far as possible, presented in standard accounting format and include a range of performance measures (ratios) that financial analysts use when assessing such things as the profitability, liquidity and indebtedness of businesses.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE MEASURES  
All non-farm industries 1990-91

Ratio	Unit	Lowest decile	Highest decile	Median value	Industry estimate
<b>Profitability ratios</b>					
Operating profit margin	per cent	-8	34	5	9
Return on funds	per cent	-53	210	19	18
Return on assets	per cent	-20	100	7	4
<b>Liquidity ratios</b>					
Liquid ratio	times	0.1	4.6	0.7	0.9
Current ratio	times	0.1	5.8	1.0	1.0
<b>Debt ratios</b>					
Interest coverage	times	-1.6	22.0	2.0	1.6
Debt to assets	per cent	—	149	77	72
<b>Labour ratios</b>					
Operating profit before tax per person employed	\$'000	-6	28	3	12
Selected labour costs per person employed	\$'000	5	38	17	26

The statistics presented in this bulletin are experimental at this stage although the survey was in development for two years before the 1990-91 results were published.

The ABS is keen to obtain input from prospective users regarding the further development of this field of statistics, which is an important part of the Bureau's strategy to upgrade its economic statistics.

For further information, order the publication *Business Operations and Industry Performance, Australia* (8140.0) or contact Bernard Williams on (06) 252 5454.

## Women in Australia

How have women's rights changed in Australia over the last 20 years? Does reality match the legislative and attitudinal changes?

A new social report *Women in Australia* brings together statistics from a wide range of ABS and other sources to provide a consolidated profile based on many of the issues of concern for Australian women today. It comprises eight chapters covering population and family issues, health, education, work, income, housing and leisure.

The following extracts from the report provide examples of the progress made in women's participation in education and the labour force.

Over the past decade, the representation of women in higher education has increased substantially; from 45 per cent in 1981 to 53 per cent in 1991. Since 1988, more women than men have enrolled in higher education courses.

Between 1988 and 1991 women increased their representation in all fields of study. In 1991, women were over-represented in health (74%), education (73%) and arts, humanities and social sciences (68%), and considerably under-represented in engineering and surveying (11%).

In August 1992 there were 3.6 million women in the labour force representing a participation rate of 52 per cent. Between 1966 and 1992, the labour force participation rate of married women increased from 29 per cent to 53 per cent.

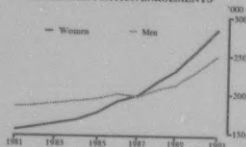
More than half of all employed women are found in two occupational groups; in August 1992, 31 per cent of employed women were clerks, and 24 per cent were salespersons and personal service workers.

Despite considerable gains since the early 1970s, women in Australia still earn significantly less than men. Overall, women's earnings in 1989-90 were, on average, only 61 per cent of men's. The relatively large proportions of part-time or part-year female workers account for some of the difference.

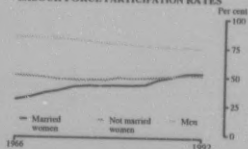
Among full-year, full-time workers women earned 76 per cent as much as men, an increase from 64 per cent in 1973-74. In 1989-90 women clerical workers earned 77 per cent as much as men in the same occupational category. Among salespersons and personal service workers the female/male earnings ratio was lower (67%).

For further information, order the publication *Women in Australia* (4113.0), or contact Natalie Bobbin on (06) 252 6215.

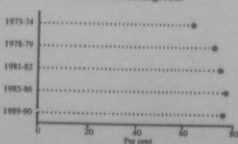
HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLMENTS



LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES



FULL-YEAR, FULL-TIME WORKERS  
Female/male earnings ratio



## Safety and Melbourne homes

The residents of Melbourne have been found to have a mixed bag of reactions to a range of household safety issues.

A survey collecting details of safety hazards and products and accidents within and around Melbourne homes was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the Victorian Department of Health and Community Services in November 1992.

The survey found that 33 per cent of all households in the Melbourne Statistical Division had smoke detectors installed (39% of households who owned their homes and 13% who rented).

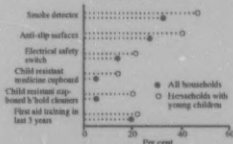
Electrical safety switches were installed in 14 per cent of all households, with rented premises again showing a much lower proportion (7%) than households who owned their homes (16%).

Firearms were present in 8 per cent of households and 70 per cent of these stored ammunition in the home. Fifty-seven per cent of households both with firearms and young children stored the firearms in a wardrobe or cupboard compared with 25 per cent who stored firearms in a steel box or gun safe.

Where children aged under 5 years were present in the household, only 15 per cent reported having child resistant medicine cupboards.

Seventy-nine per cent of households with young children and with swimming pools had a fence surrounding the perimeter of the pool area; 35 per cent had child resistant gates to the pool.

SAFETY APPLIANCES AND FIRST AID TRAINING



SAFETY PRODUCTS  
Per '000 households

	Young child	No young child	Total
Smoke detector	83.0	284.4	367.5
Anti slip surfaces	72.1	236.3	308.4
Child resistant medicine cupboard	25.9	32.7	58.6
Child resistant cupboard for household cleaners	36.7	23.5	60.2
Electrical safety switch	38.9	119.9	158.8
Resident with first aid training and CPR within last 3 years	40.2	182.4	222.6
Total households	178.3	942.6	1,120.9

Where children aged under 2 years were present in the household, 12 per cent had a baby walker in use. A further 13 per cent of these households had a baby walker which was stored but not in use.

Injuries to the usual resident, occurring in or around the home and requiring medical attention, were reported to have occurred in 7 per cent of all households in the period 12 months prior to the survey. The most common accident reported was a fall, at 43 per cent of all accidents.

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications mentioned in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

### ABS Central Office

PO Box 10  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616  
(06) 252 6627  
FAX (06) 253 1404

### ABS State Offices

NSW (02) 268 4611  
Vic. (03) 615 7000  
Qld (07) 222 6351  
WA (09) 323 5140  
SA (08) 237 7100  
Tas. (002) 20 5800  
NT (089) 432 111

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### Editor

(06) 252 6104

Statistics Weekly  
13 May 1993

## Order from the following:

### Expected releases over the fortnight to 25 May

- 13 The Labour Force, Australia, April 1993, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.70)
- 14 Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, March 1993 (6407.0; \$10.70)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, March 1993 (6408.0; \$8.20)
- 17 Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, March 1993 (5609.0; \$10.70)
- 18 Export Price Index, Australia, March 1993 (6405.0; \$8.20)
- 19 Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, March 1993 (6412.0; \$10.70)
- 20 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, March 1993 (6411.0; \$10.70)  
Import Price Index, Australia, March 1993 (6414.0; \$8.20)
- 21 Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1994, March Quarter 1993 Survey, Preliminary (5625.0; \$10.70)
- 25 Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, February 1993 (6302.0; \$12.70)  
Manufacturing Production, Australia, April 1993, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.70)

### Selected releases: 5 to 11 May

#### General

- Profiles of Australian Business, 1992 (1322.0; \$21.00) — *new issue*
- Census of Population and Housing  
1991 Census — Urban Centres/Localities Code List (2909.0; \$10.00) — *new issue*  
1991 Census — Census Counts for Small Areas, SA (2730.4; \$25.00) — *new issue*

#### Demography

- Demography, WA, 1991 (3311.5; \$27.50)

#### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

- Australian National Accounts: State Accounts, December Qtr 1992 (5242.0; \$21.40) — *new issue*

#### Labour statistics and prices

- Price Indexes of Copper Materials, Aust., April 1993 (6410.0; \$5.60)
- Price Indexes of Materials Used in Coal Mining, Aust., March 1993 (6415.0; \$10.70)
- The Labour Force, Vic., February 1993 (6202.2; \$16.30)

#### Agriculture

- Crops, Pastures and Fruit, Vic., 1991-92 (7330.2; \$27.50)
- Agriculture Statistics — Selected Small Area Data, SA, 1991-92 (7120.4; \$16.30)

#### Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service Industries, Building and Construction

- Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Food, Drink, Tobacco, Stock and Poultry Food, February 1993 (8359.0; \$10.70)
- Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Fibres, Yarns, Fabrics, Bedding and Floor Coverings, February 1993 (8360.0; \$10.70)
- Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Wood and Wood Products, February 1993 (8369.0; \$7.00)
- Sales of Australian Wine and Brandy by Winemakers, March 1993 (8504.0; \$10.70)
- Building Approvals, NSW, March 1993 (8731.1; \$10.70)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous	Corresponding
					period	period last year
<b>National accounts</b>						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	n.a.	93,598	0.7	2.5
<b>International accounts</b>						
Balance on current account (b)	Mar. 93	\$m	-1,935	-2,132	148	98
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-554	-709	—	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-668	-933	—	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5,012	4,739	-7	5
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5,566	-5,448	16	26
Net foreign debt	31 Dec. 92	\$m	168,251	n.a.	2.7	16.1
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	213,744	n.a.	2.6	13.1
<b>Consumption and investment</b>						
Retail turnover at current prices	Mar. 93	\$m	7,835	8,017	-1.2	2.5
New capital expenditure at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	"	7,020	6,472	13.0	10.9
New motor vehicle registrations	Mar. 93	no.	51,598	45,109	3.6	-5.1
<b>Production</b>						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	34,960	33,470	2.7	2.2
Dwelling unit approvals	Mar. 93	no.	15,759	14,559	1.6	13.6
Building approvals	"	\$m	2,114	1,972	-7.2	13.8
Buildng work done at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	"	6,351	6,086	2.0	6.1
<b>Prices</b>						
Consumer price index	Mar. qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	108.9	n.a.	0.9	1.2
Articles produced by manufacturing industry	Feb. 93	1988-89 = 100.0	114.8	n.a.	0.3	2.9
Materials used in manufacturing industries	Feb. 93	1984-85 = 100.0	126.7	n.a.	0.0	4.8
<b>Labour force and demography</b>						
Employed persons (d)	Mar. 93	'000	7,730.1	7,727.3	0.9	0.4
Participation rate † (d)	"	%	63.0	62.7	0.3	-0.4
Unemployment rate † (d)	"	"	11.3	10.9	-0.2	0.4
Job vacancies	Feb. 93	'000	29.8	28.9	-4.4	8.3
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.14	1.16	3.0	3.8
Estimated resident population at end of qtr	Sept. 92	million	17.6	n.a.	0.3	1.3
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals (d)	Jan. 93	'000	243	239	7.7	19.7
<b>Incomes</b>						
Company profits before income tax	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	4,853	3,728	-10.2	25.1
Average weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	Feb. 93	\$	595.50	n.a.	1.5	1.1
<b>Financial markets</b>						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	Mar. 93	% per annum	5.35	n.a.	-0.45	-2.20
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	7.80	n.a.	-0.20	-2.10
Exchange rate — \$/US	Mar. 93	per \$A	0.7073	n.a.	4	-7

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 13 May 1993.  
NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Key State indicators	Period	Percentage change from same period previous year							
		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
New capital expenditure*	Sept. qtr 92	-15.9	-15.2	2.9	-29.3	0.3	-18.8	n.a.	n.a.
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	Mar. 93	-0.9	2.9	6.2	0.3	7.6	3.5	n.a.	7.1
New motor vehicle registrations†	Mar. 93	-4.5	-3.9	-10.5	-5.6	-3.5	2.6	16.3	25.3
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	Mar. 93	15.5	10.9	21.8	7.8	8.5	7.2	120.8	-19.7
Value of total building work done	Dec. qtr 92	-7.7	-1.2	15.8	15.2	16.4	13.1	-9.5	-0.5
Employed persons*	Mar. 93	-2.9	0.6	3.5	0.4	5.1	-0.1	-5.5	4.9
Capital city consumer price index	Mar. qtr 93	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.9	0.3	1.6	-1.4	1.8
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	Nov. 92	0.9	1.2	1.4	3.4	1.2	3.2	5.9	1.7
Population	Sept. 92	1.1	0.8	2.5	0.7	1.6	0.8	1.0	2.3
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	Sept. qtr 92	3.9	2.5	3.7	0.2	2.0	-0.7	-0.7	1.7

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.  
Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

